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## A LEADER TALKS

# Bay of Pigs— Story Behind The Stories

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**T**HAT ABSURDITY of recent times—the Bay of Pigs—has been getting a great going-over this Summer.

Not much of value has been gained, except in royalties to the authors of the latest three revelations. The truth about the Bay of Pigs stays bottled up, if in-

So call another witness. Here is what President Luis Somoza of Nicaragua told me on Feb. 2, 1962.

### 'MY MISTAKE'

"I was the coordinator from this end. The expedition was staged through here. I feel I am as responsible for the failure as was President Kennedy.

"My mistake was that I did not stop the expedition when I knew it was going fatally wrong... I am not a technician of war but I know enough to see when technicians are going astray.

"On Thursday before the curtain went up I got a call from CIA, Washington. I was told, 'We are moving up the first two strikes 24 hours. They go Saturday instead of Sunday.'

"I objected vehemently for I knew the change spelled ruin. There would be no surprise. The air strikes and the landing would be 48 hours apart.

### WANTED TO CANCEL

"I tried to call the White House but could not get through. For a time I thought of cancelling the show on my own, but in the end agreed to send the strikes on.

"That's why I feel guilty.

"About why the change was made, I was never told. My assumption is that it was done to test American public sentiment as revealed in

press and TV reaction over the weekend."

Since Mr. Somoza is obviously telling the truth as he sees it, that leaves but two conclusions to be drawn:

Either he was deceived all along about the operations plan, or our three oracles, for reasons of their own, have omitted mention of the 11th-hour switch.

In the end, there were only 11 bomber sorties out of 45 scheduled.

### ASSURED BY CIA

"I took assurances from the wrong people—CIA agents," Mr. Somoza said. "I thought they spoke for your government. You had carriers off our coast covering the buildup at Puerto Cabezas. I asked: 'Will they be prepared to support the invasion in an emergency?' The answer was: 'Certainly!'

"I told the men that the U.S. carriers would intervene, if things went wrong.

"I misled them because I had been misled."

### AFTER KOREA

There was a time when this government felt the people had a right to know all, and not just the parts that are good for them. But that old-fashioned idea died shortly after Korea.

No full and responsible accounting followed the Bay of Pigs. There is no system for such operations in Viet Nam and no one seems to want it.

The current chronicles about the Bay of Pigs shows how history becomes cheated as a result.

The authors, Dr. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., historian; Theodore C. Sorensen, special counsel to the late President Kennedy, and Richard M. Bissell Jr., who directed the operations for the Central Intelligence Agency—are all men of character, true insiders who absorbed all the secrets and therefore collectively should be able to give us the real lowdown.

### STORIES DIFFER

Yet, the three accounts do not agree among themselves, and where they chance to coincide, their unanimity but raises questions which have answers.

It appears plain that what the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not know about the operation the three authors did not try to find out. Nor did they later exchange basic information with one another.

Each writes as if, from his own narrow track, he could get the whole of it.

The two White House men both believe that the operation was doomed from the beginning by too much wishful thinking. Mr. Bissell contends that his plan missed success by a narrow margin, which means that he remembers mainly how three Castro planes blew up his expedition, and forgets that he didn't have enough strength anywhere to afford him much of a chance anyhow.

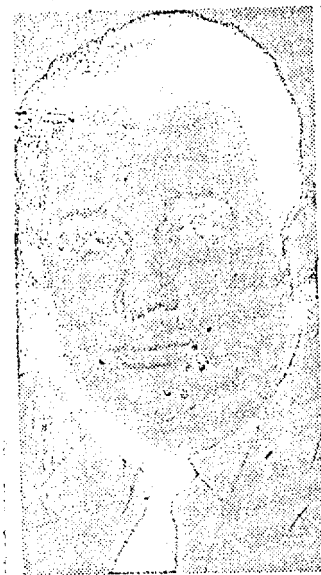
### THE FATAL BLOW

In all three chronicles, the cancellation of the third strike by order of the White House is re-examined critically. Mr. Bissell calls it the fatal blow. The others say it was inconsequential—that the try was already irretrievably lost.

Mr. Bissell says outright that the exiles were told flatly there would be no U.S. intervention, at which point he disagrees with Mr. Sorensen, who asserts just as positively that the high hopes of the exile brigade were pinned on the promise of direct U.S. support.

All these contradictions, plus the Somoza interview, underscore the main question: Does the nation any longer get dependable information on its most important affairs, and if not, as a free people, do we have a decent claim on survival?

From the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service.



PRESIDENT SOMOZA

deed the bottle has not been busted and its bits flushed into Chesapeake Bay by the official custodians.

One curious thing is that all three authors discuss the first two strikes by the B-26s as if they were carried out exactly as planned, with no mention of a last-minute disarrangement, to which cancellation of the third strike became a mere afterthought in the sequence.